

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
July 12 - 19, 2012

1. [Russian, Chinese Veto of Syria Resolution "Deplorable," Rice Says](#) (07-19-2012)
2. [Commentary by Secretary Clinton on Art of Smart Power](#) (07-18-2012)
3. [International Community Will Ensure Strait of Hormuz Stays Open](#) (07-18-2012)
4. [U.S., Partners Cooperate to Counter 21st-Century Threats](#) (07-18-2012)
5. [U.S., Special Envoy Annan Urge Russian Cooperation on Syria](#) (07-17-2012)
6. [Clinton Visits Egypt, Pledges U.S. Support for Egyptian People](#) (07-15-2012)

1. [Russian, Chinese Veto of Syria Resolution "Deplorable," Rice Says](#) (07-19-2012)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Russia's and China's veto of a U.N. Security Council resolution on Syria that would have imposed Chapter 7 consequences for failing to implement a U.N. peace plan is "dangerous and deplorable," said U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N. Susan Rice, and it marks the third time both countries have "prevented the Security Council from responding credibly to the Syrian conflict."

Speaking at the United Nations in New York July 19, Rice said the resolution would have given political support to the 300-person United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) and "given it a fighting chance to accomplish its mandate," which is due to expire July 20. UNSMIS was deployed to oversee the implementation of U.N. and Arab League Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan's peace plan, but it was forced to suspend its monitoring activities in mid-June because of escalating violence.

"The only way that unarmed United Nations observers could ever deter violence is if their reports of the Syrian regime's persistent violations of the Annan plan and of their own commitments led this Security Council to impose swift and meaningful consequences for noncompliance, as requested, indeed demanded, by our Joint Special Envoy," Rice said.

Bashar al-Assad's regime continues to fire heavy weapons against Syrians, detains and tortures its citizens and maintains "a horrific posture of intimidation and harassment," according to reports from Annan, the UNSMIS team leader and other international officials, Rice said.

"They reported recently that the Syrian regime had escalated its crackdown, employing tanks and helicopter gunships. They reported on various occasions that the Syrian government-backed Shabiha militia were terrorizing entire communities, including sexually assaulting women and children," she said.

Rice said the Security Council "has failed utterly in its most important task on its agenda this year," and described the outcome of the vote as "another dark day in Turtle Bay." The states that refuse to take firm action against the Assad regime are at odds with the majority of the Security Council, the League of Arab States, and the more than 100 countries in the Group of Friends of the Syrian people who called for Chapter 7 action.

Their position is also "at odds with the wishes and aspirations of the vast majority of the Syrian people, who deserve so much better from this Security Council," Rice said.

The July 18 attack in Damascus that killed three members of Assad's inner circle "is indicative of how the situation in Syria will continue to deteriorate in the face of this Council's inaction." The United States will intensify its work with partners outside the Security Council in order to "bring pressure to bear on the Assad regime and to deliver assistance to those in need," Rice said.

White House press secretary Jay Carney told reporters traveling with President Obama that the vetoes by Russia and China were "very regrettable," and that it is "absurd" for the U.N. to send unarmed observers amid the violence and brutality of the Assad regime "if the consequences of failing to live up to ... the Assad regime's commitments are nonexistent."

China and Russia's decisions will have repercussions for a long time in terms of how they are viewed by the Syrian people "because there is no doubt that Syria's future will not include Bashar al-Assad. His days are numbered, and it's a mistake to prop up the regime as it comes to an end," Carney said.

[Ambassador Rice at U.N. Security Council on Syria](#)
[U.N. Envoy Rice's Response to Vetoing of Syria Resolution](#)

2. Commentary by Secretary Clinton on Art of Smart Power (07-18-2012)

This op-ed by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton was originally published in the New Statesman on July 18 and the U.S. Department of State website. There are no republication restrictions for use by U.S. embassies.

The Art of Smart Power

By Hillary Rodham Clinton

As the balance of world power shifts, the US is developing a novel range of diplomatic, social, economic, political and security tools to fix the world's complex new geopolitical problems.

I touched down in Beijing in May for the fourth round of the US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue with a jam-packed agenda, but the world's attention was focused instead on the fate of a

blind human rights dissident who had sought refuge in the American embassy. Suddenly, an already delicate trip had become an outsized test of the US-China relationship.

Throughout history, the rise of new powers usually has played out in zero-sum terms. So it is not surprising that the emergence of countries such as China, India and Brazil has raised questions about the future of the global order that the United States, the United Kingdom and our allies have helped build and defend. Against this backdrop, those few days in May took on even greater significance: could the US and China write a new answer to the old question of what happens when an established power and rising power meet?

When I became secretary of state in early 2009, there were questions about the future of America's global leadership. We faced two long and expensive wars, an economy in free fall, fraying alliances and an international system that seemed to be buckling under the weight of new threats.

A lot has changed in three years. Under President Obama's leadership, the US has ended the war in Iraq and begun a transition in Afghanistan; we have revitalised American diplomacy, strengthened our alliances and re-engaged with multilateral institutions. And while the economic recovery is not as strong as anyone would like, we have pulled back from the brink and are heading in the right direction.

New powers are playing a greater role on the world stage. But this is not 1912, when friction between a declining Britain and a rising Germany set the stage for global conflict. It is 2012, and a strong America is working with new powers and partners to update an international system designed to prevent global conflict and promote global prosperity.

Today, the great powers are at peace and no totalitarian empire threatens the world as it did during the Second World War and the cold war. But we face different challenges – from the financial crisis and growing income inequality to climate change, nuclear proliferation and international terrorism – that spill across borders and defy unilateral solutions. At the same time, political and technological changes are allowing huge numbers of people around the world to influence events as never before. And new players, from those emerging economic powers to non-state actors such as corporations and cartels, are reshaping the international landscape.

So the geometry of global power is becoming more distributed and diffuse even as the challenges we face become more complex and cross-cutting. That means that building coalitions for common action is becoming both more complicated and more crucial.

Still, amidst all this change, two constants remain. First, as the world becomes ever more interconnected and interdependent, a just, open and sustainable international order is required to promote global peace and prosperity. And second, that order depends on American economic, military and diplomatic leadership, which has underwritten global peace and prosperity for decades.

The United States is leading in new ways that fit a new time – a time of complex challenges and scarce resources. Of course the day-to-day work of foreign policy has to contend with the crises of the moment, but we are also working to prioritise our long-term investments in the areas of greatest opportunity and consequence, as well as the areas of greatest threat.

For the US, our historical alliances in Europe and east Asia remain the bedrock of our global leadership. The UK and other allies are our partners of first resort, working side by side on everything from stopping Iran's quest for nuclear weapons to protecting civilians in Libya to achieving an Aids-free generation. We have worked together for decades to shape the global order

and to defend its core principles, and the future of that order depends on the enduring strength of our partnership.

Yet, as strong as our historical alliances are, we also recognise the need to work with new partners. Because new regional and global centres of influence are quickly emerging – and not just India and China but also countries such as Turkey, Mexico, Brazil, Indonesia and South Africa, as well as Russia. Some of these are democracies that share many of our core values; others have very different political systems and perspectives. Aligning our interests isn't always easy – we're seeing just how difficult it can be on Syria. But we have also had successes, maintaining broad-based pressure on Iran and North Korea. And we have seen the value of engaging not just bilaterally, but in multilateral settings such as the G20, where norms can be shaped and shared. For the US, working with these new players in the years ahead, encouraging them to accept the responsibility that comes with influence and ensuring their full integration into the international order is a critical test for our diplomacy.

A zero-sum approach will only lead to negative-sum results. So we need to find areas where we can work together and strengthen diplomatic mechanisms that build trust and help manage our differences. The Strategic and Economic Dialogue with China that brought me to Beijing in May is a good example. The US-India Strategic Dialogue, which we held in Washington in June, is another. These wide-ranging talks bring together hundreds of experts and officials from both sides to tackle a long list of common concerns.

Our aim is to embed expanding bilateral relationships in a robust international order: to strengthen and mature effective regional and global institutions that can mobilise common action and settle disputes peacefully; to build consensus around rules and norms that help manage relations between peoples, markets and nations; and to establish security arrangements that provide stability and build trust.

For this to succeed, we have to work together with emerging powers to renovate the global architecture to reflect better the dynamics of today's world. For example, we are pulling together new groups of nations to work on specific issues, as in the Global Counterterrorism Forum that we launched last September, or our new Climate and Clean Air Coalition, which is targeting the short-lived pollutants that account for up to 30 per cent of global warming. And we recognise that some international rules and institutions designed for an earlier age have to be rethought and reconfigured.

But as we do this, there are universal principles that undergird the international order and must be defended: fundamental freedoms and universal human rights; an open, free, transparent and fair economic system; the peaceful resolution of disputes; and respect for the territorial integrity of states. These are norms that benefit everyone and that help all people and nations live and trade in peace.

The international system based on these principles helped fuel, not foil, the rise of emerging powers such as China and India. Those nations have benefited from the security it provides, the markets it opens and the trust it fosters. As a consequence, they have a stake in the success of that system. And as their power and capacity grow, they will rightly face increasing expectations – from the world to shoulder a share of common challenges abroad and from their own people to solve problems at home.

To understand how engaging emerging powers within this kind of framework can deliver results, consider the East Asia Summit. It brings together the leaders of all the leading nations in the Asia-

Pacific to grapple with the region's biggest challenges and pursue comprehensive solutions, whether on non-proliferation, disaster response, or maritime security. Until last year, the US was not a full member. But this past November, we officially joined and committed to help the summit become the premier regional forum for political and security matters.

High on the agenda was the South China Sea. The South China Sea connects many of the nations of the Asia-Pacific, some of which have competing claims on its waters and islands. Half the world's merchant tonnage flows through the South China Sea, so the stakes for maritime security and freedom of navigation are high. Trying to settle such complex disputes bilaterally, one on one, is a recipe for confusion and even confrontation. That is why when President Obama joined his fellow leaders at the East Asia Summit, they convened a discussion with all the major players on a framework for advancing a comprehensive regional solution. Recent renewed tensions in the South China Sea only underscore the importance of pursuing such a multilateral approach.

Over the past three years, the Obama administration has made it a priority to engage with regional institutions like the East Asia Summit and with increasingly effective regional actors like the Arab League and the African Union. Just a few years ago, some of these institutions lacked both capability and credibility. That's changing fast. And this presents an opportunity to bring nations together to promote regional stability and security in hotspots like the South China Sea or the Horn of Africa.

Continuing difficulties in the eurozone are a reminder that effective regional co-ordination and integration is no simple challenge. However, Europe's experience also shows the benefits this approach can bring. A continent riven for centuries by conflict and divisions managed to achieve unprecedented peace and prosperity by opening its borders, integrating its economies and co-ordinating its policies. This historic project is not complete, and in these difficult days it is essential to keep working towards a Europe that is whole, free, democratic and at peace.

All of these strategies to address the rise of new powers and the demands of a shifting international landscape reflect a fundamental lesson about what it takes to lead and to solve problems in today's complex world. It is no longer enough to be strong. Great powers also have to be savvy and persuasive. The test of our leadership going forward will be our ability to mobilise disparate people and nations to work together to solve common problems and advance shared values and aspirations. To do that, we need to expand our foreign policy toolbox, integrate every asset and partner, and fundamentally change the way we do business. I call this approach smart power.

For example, we recognise that countries such as China, India and Brazil are gaining influence less because of the size of their armies than because of the growth of their economies. And we have learned that our national security today depends on decisions made not just in diplomatic negotiations and on the battlefield, but also in the financial markets and on factory floors. So the US has made it a priority to harness more effectively the tools of global economics to advance our strategic aims abroad. That might mean finding innovative financial levers to ratchet up pressure on Iran's nuclear programme, or forming new public-private partnerships that put corporate energy and expertise to work on such challenges as climate change and food security. We are also focused on boosting our economy at home through a greater emphasis on economic statecraft and what I call jobs diplomacy.

Here's another example: a defining feature of our age is that people – especially young people empowered by new connection technologies – have become a strategic force in their own right. All governments, even authoritarian regimes, are learning that they cannot ignore the needs and

aspirations of their citizens. And as we have seen in the Middle East and North Africa, this has profound implications for regional and global stability.

So we are exploring new ways to reach beyond traditional government-to-government relations and engage directly with people around the world. That means using technologies such as Twitter and SMS to open dialogues with everyone from civil society advocates in Russia to farmers in Kenya to students in Colombia. But it also means advancing a comprehensive agenda to support effective democratic transitions in places such as Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya and championing the universal rights of people everywhere. In today's world, this is a hallmark of American leadership and a strategic imperative.

My experiences as secretary of state have reaffirmed the link between standing up for human dignity abroad and ensuring national security at home. It is no coincidence that many of the places where we see the most instability and conflict are also places where women are abused and denied their rights, young people are ignored, minorities are persecuted and civil society is curtailed. Think of the Taliban burning down girls' schools in Afghanistan, or the use of mass rape as a weapon of war in Congo. These kinds of abuses aren't just symptoms of instability – they actually drive instability.

By the same token, it is also no coincidence that many of our closest allies are countries that embrace pluralism and tolerance, equal rights and equal opportunities. These are not western values, they are universal values. So, it is in our interest to help those who have been historically excluded to become full participants in the economic and political lives of their countries. And it is in our interest to support citizens working for democratic change, whether they are in Tunis or Rangoon. Otherwise, we will keep facing the same cycles of conflict and volatility.

In particular, empowering women and girls around the world is crucial to seizing long-term opportunities for promoting peace, democracy and sustainable development. We know that when women have the opportunity to contribute, they can drive social, political and economic progress not just for themselves, but for entire societies. Goldman Sachs has reported that reducing barriers to women's participation in the workforce would increase America's GDP by 9 per cent, increase the eurozone's by 13 per cent and Japan's by 16 per cent. That is growth we cannot afford to pass up. So we've made expanding opportunities for women a cornerstone of America's foreign policy. We've launched ambitious efforts to increase women's participation in the economy by opening access to credit and markets, to enhance the role of women in resolving conflicts and maintaining security, and to focus global health programmes on the needs of mothers, who are linchpins of entire communities.

Whether it is elevating an institution such as the East Asia Summit to provide a forum for regional co-operation, using new economic tools such as hi-tech sanctions to advance strategic ends, or engaging directly with civil society to take on scourges such as corruption or extremism, the common thread running through all our efforts is a commitment to adapt America's global leadership for the needs of a changing world.

And even as we seek out new partnerships and new ways of solving problems, there will continue to be times when the US will and must act boldly, directly and alone – for example, to pursue Osama Bin Laden. Such occasions will be rare, and we will turn to them only as a last resort, but we take seriously our responsibilities as a global leader and our responsibilities to the American people.

All of this – the changing international landscape, the complex demands on America's global leadership and our efforts to revitalise diplomacy for the 21st century – was on my mind as I arrived

in Beijing on that tense day in May. And it gave me confidence as we negotiated our way through the week. In the end, the relationship we have worked so hard to build with China proved more durable and dynamic than many feared. Both countries stayed focused on our shared agenda and engaged candidly on a wide range of critical issues, from cyber-security to North Korea to the South China Sea. And today, that blind dissident is safely studying law in New York.

America and our allies have come through a long decade of war, terrorism and recession. These continue to be difficult days for many of our citizens. But as I travel the world, I see evidence that our leadership is still respected and required. Yes, this is because of our military and our material might, but it is also because of our commitment to fairness, justice, freedom and democracy – not just to our own good, but to the greater good.

There is no real precedent in history for the role we play or the responsibility we have shouldered, and there is no alternative. That is what makes American leadership so exceptional, and it is why I am confident that we will continue to serve and defend a peaceful and prosperous global order for many years to come.

(The author is the U.S. secretary of state.)

3. International Community Will Ensure Strait of Hormuz Stays Open (07-18-2012)

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, July 18, 2012 – Iranian leaders must understand that the international community will ensure the Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Persian Gulf will remain open, the American and British defense secretaries said here today.

For years, various Iranian leaders have threatened to shut the passage -- a crucial international waterway through which passes roughly 25 percent of the world's oil.

"The Iranians need to understand that the United States and the international community are going to hold them directly responsible for any disruption of shipping in that region -- by Iran or, for that matter, by its surrogates," Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta told reporters at a joint Pentagon news conference with British Defense Secretary Philip Hammond.

"The United States is fully prepared for all contingencies here," Panetta added. "We've invested in capabilities to ensure that the Iranian attempt to close down shipping in the Gulf is something that we are going to be able to defeat if they make that decision to do that."

Hammond reinforced Panetta's comments, saying forces of the United Kingdom will cooperate fully to keep the strait open. "We are determined to work as part of the international community effort to ensure freedom of passage in the international waters of the Strait of Hormuz," Hammond said.

The United States is leading the effort, and Hammond praised Panetta's decision to send the USS John C. Stennis Carrier Strike Group to the U.S. Central Command region, calling it "a powerful signal."

The British have supporting assets in the Persian Gulf, and those forces will work closely with the United States and others to defend the international waterway.

Naval forces from a number of countries will also participate in the International Mine Countermeasures Exercise 2012 in September. The U.S. Central Command exercise will be held Sept. 16-17.

This defensive exercise is designed to preserve freedom of navigation in the international waterways of the Middle East and promote regional stability. More than 20 nations have agreed to participate in the exercise.

Such exercises “enhance cooperation, mutual maritime capabilities and long-term regional stability and interoperability between the U.S. and its international partners while preparing the international community to address threats to freedom of navigation and international commerce,” according to a U.S. Central Command release.

Biographies:

[Leon E. Panetta](#)

Related Sites:

[U.S. Central Command](#)
[Transcript](#)

4. U.S., Partners Cooperate to Counter 21st-Century Threats (07-18-2012)

By MacKenzie C. Babb
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States is engaging in partnerships with countries around the world to build military cooperation in the fight against 21st-century security threats, according to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

U.S. Army General Martin Dempsey spoke about the benefits of partnerships July 17 at the National Guard Symposium on Mutual Security Cooperation in Washington.

He said that in the past, governments around the world had a monopoly on top-end technologies related to lethal force and military instruments.

“I think it’s pretty clear to everybody that nation-states no longer have that monopoly,” Dempsey said. “And what that does is it increases the risk in ways that I think we all need to continue to talk about and think about and interact about.”

The chairman commended the National Guard’s State Partnership Program as a platform to do just that.

The 65-nation program provides unique partnership-building capabilities to combatant commanders and U.S. ambassadors through partnerships between foreign countries and U.S. states, territories and the District of Columbia.

“The State Partnership Program supports U.S. national interests and security cooperation goals by engaging partner nations via military, sociopolitical and economic conduits at the local, state and national level,” according to the National Guard website.

Since its start in 1992, the program has become a key U.S. security cooperation tool, facilitating collaboration across all aspects of international civil-military affairs and encouraging people-to-people ties at the state level.

“Building partnership capacity is a core element of everything we do and everything we hope to accomplish,” said Kathleen Hicks, principal deputy undersecretary of defense for policy. She spoke along with Dempsey at the July 17 conference, which honored the 20th anniversary of the State Partnership Program.

Developing these partnerships “is a critical skill set across the armed forces,” Hicks said. She said cooperating with allies and partners is vital, and has played a critical role in military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya.

But Hicks said networks of security collaboration are important not just in times of crisis, but also in day-to-day deterrence. She said partners are currently working together to counter transnational crime, enhance maritime security and strengthen global humanitarian assistance.

Additionally, security cooperation is fiscally responsible, Hicks said.

“Building partnership capacity elsewhere in the world also remains important for sharing costs and responsibilities for global leadership,” she said, adding that the United States military and its allies are committed to developing “innovative, low-cost and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives.”

Dempsey echoed that message, calling military cooperation “really a modest investment for a pretty substantial return.”

Hicks said the National Guard, the oldest branch of the U.S. armed forces, is well-positioned for global military cooperation, as members’ dual state and federal status affords them a broad range of skills and experience applicable to the challenges partner nations face.

5. U.S., Special Envoy Annan Urge Russian Cooperation on Syria (07-17-2012)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States is pressing Russia to agree to a U.N. Security Council resolution on Syria that would impose consequences on the Syrian government for its failure to comply with U.N. and Arab League Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan’s peace efforts, including ending the use of heavy weaponry against the Syrian people.

In Jerusalem, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said July 16 that U.S. diplomats “are working very hard in New York in the Security Council to obtain a Chapter 7 resolution with consequences,” and that Annan is in Moscow for discussions with Russian officials in an effort to directly make the case for the resolution.

Annan has expressed the need for a Chapter 7 resolution, and Clinton said, “We agree with that completely. So we’re going to continue to press forward in the Security Council. We’re going to continue to press the Russians because that is an important part of reaching a resolution in the Security Council.”

The secretary expressed concern over the increase in violence, which has spread to the Syrian capital, Damascus, and its suburbs, and said Bashar al-Assad’s regime cannot survive.

“I just wish that it would move out of the way sooner instead of later so that more lives could be saved, and we could have the chance to achieve the kind of democratic transition that we all, including Russia, agreed to,” she said.

In an interview with CNN July 16, Clinton said the United States is trying to intervene in the conflict “in a way that brings about an end to the violence and a transition to a democratic future,” but which “doesn’t require adding to the violence, further militarizing the conflict, perhaps killing more people and pushing them across the borders.”

The secretary said “everyone is very wary, for good reason, of that kind of intervention,” and does not want to add to the violence.

She urged others in the international community to “put pressure on Russia in the Security Council so that they will support a Chapter 7 resolution,” that imposes “very hard sanctions on people and institutions that support the regime” if it fails to implement U.N. peace efforts.

“That would be the best signal we could send to Assad that his days are numbered,” she said.

In New York, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan Rice said July 16 that more than 100 Syrians are dying per day on average, and the Security Council needs to “do something different to change the dynamic on the ground.”

In his July 10 report to the Security Council, Annan said Assad had repeated his commitment to immediately halt the use of heavy weapons against the Syrian people, but Rice said he has instead “intensified” their use, including at the village of Traymseh where 200 men, women and children were massacred by Syrian forces using artillery, tanks and helicopters.

The Security Council is discussing the renewal of the 300-person United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS), whose mandate expires July 20. Rice said the Chapter 7 resolution that has been put on the table by the United Kingdom addresses the need for “something new” in response to the nearly 18 months of violence in Syria.

Annan’s peace efforts need to be made binding, and the Security Council needs to be prepared to “consider and to implement sanctions in a short period of time if nothing changes,” she said.

Given Assad’s repeated failure to honor his commitments, “we think this resolution is the only one that makes any sense,” Rice said.

“What we’re asking is that the Council do something different, that we apply meaningful pressure on the Assad regime to stop the use of heavy weapons, which is a critical first step to get any cease-fire going and to get any political process going. But if we do nothing, if we just perpetuate the status quo, then we are consigning Syria and the region to much-intensified conflict,” she said.

U.S. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE CONTINUES

According to a July 16 State Department fact sheet, the Obama administration is providing nearly \$64 million in humanitarian relief for people who have been affected by the violence, both inside Syria and in neighboring countries that are hosting those who have fled the violence.

The assistance includes \$27.5 million to the World Food Programme; \$15.1 million to various nongovernmental organizations; \$8.5 million to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees; and \$8 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross. In addition, the United States is providing support through the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; the U.N. Children's Fund; the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; and the U.N. Department of Safety and Security.

According to the fact sheet, the United Nations estimates that up to 1.5 million people in Syria need urgent humanitarian assistance, and between 300,000 and 500,000 have fled their homes because of the violence.

U.S. assistance has included medical supplies, food, water, clothing, hygiene kits and other humanitarian relief, and is being distributed to the most vulnerable "on the basis of need, not political affiliation," the State Department said.

The State Department praised humanitarian workers in Syria who are "putting their lives on the line on a daily basis to deliver aid to those suffering from the escalating violence." It also commended the generosity of Syria's neighbors in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq, "who have kept their borders open and are hosting and providing assistance to those fleeing the violence in Syria."

6. Clinton Visits Egypt, Pledges U.S. Support for Egyptian People (07-15-2012)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, in Cairo for talks with Egyptian leaders, reaffirmed The United States' strong support for the Egyptian people and their democratic transition.

At a press briefing July 14 at the Presidential Palace alongside Foreign Minister Mohamed Kamel Amr, Clinton said, "President Mohamed Morsi and I began a constructive dialogue about the broad, enduring relationship between the United States and Egypt for the 21st century. We discussed the challenges ahead and how the United States and Egypt can work together in a spirit of mutual respect and mutual interests."

Clinton is the highest ranking U.S. official to meet with Morsi since he was sworn in two weeks ago as the nation's first democratically elected president. The meeting comes 17 months after the first demonstrations ushered in a new era for Egypt.

The meetings with Morsi, Amr and other Egyptian leaders focused on three areas — economic development and stabilization, democratic transition, and regional security, a senior State Department official said in a background briefing on the Cairo visit. The secretary's visit also includes a stop in Alexandria and talks with civil society leaders, business executives, women leaders and religious minorities, the official said.

Clinton said she and Morsi discussed President Obama's economic package to relieve up to \$1 billion in Egypt's debt as its democratic transition moves forward. Working with the U.S. Congress, Obama is preparing to provide budget support to help Egypt stabilize its economy and use debt relief to foster innovation, growth and job creation, she added. And the United States will work with Egypt for support from international financial institutions and other donors, she said.

"We are also focused on increasing trade, investment and entrepreneurship to create jobs, and are ready to make available \$250 million in loan guarantees to Egyptian small- and medium-sized businesses," Clinton said. A high-level U.S. delegation will visit Cairo in September to look for new investment and trade opportunities, and the United States is creating a U.S.-Egypt Enterprise Fund that will be launched with \$60 million. The fund model has been used in other countries to foster economic development between local business leaders and American business executives.

Clinton said she and Morsi also discussed the importance of keeping Egypt's democratic transition moving forward. She commended Morsi on his pledge to serve all Egyptians, including women and minorities, and to protect the rights of all Egyptians.

"President Morsi made clear that he understands the success of his presidency and, indeed, of Egypt's democratic transition depend on building consensus across the Egyptian political spectrum, to work on a new constitution at parliament, to protect civil society, to draft a new constitution that will be respected by all, and to assert the full authority of the presidency," Clinton added.

Clinton commended Morsi for attending the African Union Summit to reassert Egyptian leadership in Africa, and she emphasized the importance of upholding Egypt's international agreements.

"We know that Egypt's future is up to the Egyptian people, but we want to be a good partner," Clinton said. "We want to support the democracy that has been achieved by the courage and sacrifice of the Egyptian people and to see a future of great potential be realized for the nearly 90 million people of Egypt who are expecting that to occur."

In addition to meeting with Egypt's civilian leadership, Clinton also met with Egypt's top military leader, Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, in Cairo. The secretary was also scheduled to hold meetings with women civil society activists from a range of walks of life and some who work on democracy, education and health. She will also meet with women who work in the business sector, as well as a cross section of women reflecting the diversity of Egypt's civil society, a senior State Department official said.

Clinton also was scheduled on July 15 to meet with more than a dozen Christian leaders from across Egypt who represent a variety of denominations to hear their concerns and to talk to them about what they plan to do to contribute to the democratic transition and to a new Egypt over time, the senior official said.

In Alexandria, which is Egypt's Mediterranean commercial hub, Clinton was scheduled to reopen the U.S. consulate and make remarks about the positive role the United States can offer in the economic and political transition of the nation, the senior official said.
